



The Comptroller General
of the United States

Washington, D.C. 20548

Decision

Matter of: Bellsouth Government Systems, Inc.--Request for
Reconsideration

File: B-231822.5

Date: August 11, 1989

DIGEST

Request for reconsideration which essentially restates arguments previously considered and does not establish any error or provide information not previously considered is denied.

DECISION

Bellsouth Government Systems, Inc., requests reconsideration of our decision, Bellsouth Gov't Sys., Inc., B-231822.3, Mar. 28, 1989, 89-1 CPD ¶ 313, denying its protest against the award of a contract to Contel Federal Systems, Inc., to provide a basic telecommunications system for Whiteman Air Force Base, Missouri under request for proposals (RFP) No. F11624-88-R-0003 issued by the Department of the Air Force.

We deny the request for reconsideration.

The RFP issued on February 26, 1988, required the contractor to engineer, design, furnish, install, test, and maintain a new integrated voice and data telecommunication system for Whiteman Air Force Base. The system was to be equipped with 3,946 lines at cutover to the new system expandable to 8,000 lines and also be capable of terminating 107 trunks, at cutover, expandable to 236 trunks. The RFP also required that the system have the capability to add a remote switching system (RSS), compatible with the basic system, with expansion capacity to 2,000 lines. The RSS was an expansion item, not required under the basic system. The RFP further required the installation and completion of a fully operational telecommunications system within 10 months after contract award. The contractor was also to provide follow-on configuration management. The RFP provided that award would be made to the lowest priced, technically acceptable, responsible offeror. In addition to price, which was to be evaluated on a life-cycle cost basis, the

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RFP also listed technical-management factors to be evaluated including adequacy of response, equipment and material, installation maintenance, personnel and experience.

Eight proposals were submitted and all but two were determined to be technically acceptable and included in the competitive range. Of the six proposals included in the competitive range, Contel submitted the lowest price. Contel proposed a system utilizing a single Northern Telecom, Inc. (NTI), Meridian SL-1XT (SL-1) switch. Its proposal took no exception to any of the work statement for either the basic system or expansion capabilities, and the Air Force initially had no basis to question Contel's proposed approach for meeting the solicitation requirements. However, since Bellsouth raised questions concerning Contel's ability to meet certain requirements of the RFP with the switch it proposed, the agency sought clarification from Contel concerning its proposed equipment. After reviewing all technical documentation submitted by Contel and an independent consultant hired by the agency to determine if Contel's proposed switch could meet all performance criteria at the maximum expansion capacity specified in the solicitation, the agency determined that Contel would deliver a telecommunication system which complies with the RFP requirements. Award was made to Contel as the low evaluated offeror, on November 8, 1988.

In its original protest, Bellsouth contended that the single switch offered by Contel failed to conform to the technical specifications contained in the RFP in three respects. Specifically, Bellsouth first argued that the single SL-1 switch without a remote switching system cannot satisfy the RFP requirement that the switch under the basic system operate telephones at all base locations because it cannot serve both the main buildings and the weapons storage facility which is located significantly apart from the main buildings. Second, Bellsouth argued that a single SL-1 switch with a remote fails to meet the mandatory traffic volume requirements of the RFP. Lastly, Bellsouth contended that a single SL-1 switch with a remote does not satisfy the RFP's requirement that any remote proposed must operate by itself in the event the host, or basic system switch is disabled.

We concluded from our review of the record that the Air Force reasonably determined that Contel's proposed enhanced system was technically acceptable, could successfully

operate in any building on the base and met all the requirements of the solicitation.^{1/}

In its request for reconsideration, Bellsouth asserts that our decision recognized that the Contel proposal utilizes a second switch for expanded service requirement and that our Office improperly allowed the Air Force to consider only some aspects of a two-switch system (whether it can carry the required traffic) and not others (whether it meets other RFP requirements). Bellsouth also asserts that our decision failed to address the issue concerning the nonconformity of a single-switch system with any other type of communications device needed to meet solicitation requirements such as a key system, T-1 channelbanks and multiplexers.

Bellsouth basically is arguing, as it did in its original protest, that Contel's proposal should have been rejected as technically unacceptable for its failure to conform to the technical specifications contained in the RFP. We did state in our prior decision that, since Contel in fact proposed a single switch solution, without a key system communication device, to meet the basic requirements of the RFP that we would only discuss specifically the specifications Bellsouth alleges cannot be met with a single switch solution and we did not discuss the mandatory specifications that allegedly cannot be met by a key system since one was not proposed by Contel. As stated in our prior decision and as supported by the record, Contel proposed a telecommunication system, the exact nature of which is deemed proprietary, which has a single integrated data base that the record shows can meet all the mandatory requirements of the RFP such as group speed calling and call pick-up.

Bellsouth in its request for reconsideration appears to accept the fact that Contel, for the basic requirement, proposed a single switch system, without a remote, that will meet all the requirements of the RFP. However, Bellsouth asserts that certain mandatory specifications being met under the basic requirement by Contel with its single switch system cannot be met by Contel's proposed remote switching system for future expansion. The record demonstrates that the Air Force reasonably determined through the review of technical documents and with the aide of an independent private consultant that Contel's entire system was technically acceptable. Furthermore, as was stated in our prior decision, Contel's proposed solution for expanded services

^{1/} Our initial decision was reviewed by one of our staff familiar with telecommunications matters.

was specifically determined by the Air Force to be feasible and acceptable. This determination was supported by correspondence from NTI indicating the compatibility of the basic switch and the proposed remote. The record supported the reasonableness of the Air Force's evaluation and Bellsouth simply has not shown that the agency's decision was improper.

Finally, Bellsouth objects to our disclosure of Bellsouth's life-cycle evaluated cost in our original decision. We question whether the disclosure of life-cycle cost information was improper. In any event, Bellsouth has not been prejudiced by the disclosure of this information.

Since the protester, in its request for reconsideration, essentially expresses disagreement with our decision and merely reiterates previous arguments, we do not think the firm has established a basis for reconsideration. See 4 C.F.R. § 21.12(a). Accordingly, we deny the request for reconsideration.



James F. Hinchman
for General Counsel